

TOTALLY INDYPENDENT

Newsletter of Haringey Solidarity Group

www.haringey.org.uk

"If hard work were such a wonderful thing, surely the rich would have kept it all to themselves." Joseph Lane Kirkland (1922 - 1999) - American labour activist

WHAT A STINK!

If you live near the Edmonton Incinerator you know how horrible the smell from the place can be. But things could get a lot worse.

The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) want to build an even bigger incinerator on the site. It will produce 700,000 tonnes of CO2 every year, the same as an extra 250,000 diesel cars, and emit more smell and fine particulates. These particles can damage the lungs of children, and other vulnerable people, reducing life expectancy in one of the poorest parts of the UK.

Air pollution in Edmonton already goes beyond legal limits. Haringey residents will

also be affected. Yet again, it's the health of working class and people of colour that will suffer.

NLWA wants to spend more than £1 billion of our money on this new incinerator. Instead, we could invest that money in recycling facilities, educating people how to recycle better, and other ways to deal with our waste. Burning is not the answer – it will affect us all, both with our health and in our pockets as our taxes pay for it. In addition to greenhouse gases, incineration releases poisonous, nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, hydrogen chloride, dioxins, furans and heavy metals.

But local people are fighting

back. Stop The Edmonton Incinerator Now (STEIN) have had regular demonstrations both outside the proposed site and against the seven councils involved in the plans (Haringey, Enfield, Barnet, Camden, Hackney, Islington, Waltham Forest). They are demanding that alternatives are looked at before incineration.

September 2021 saw local people, Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion close down the North Circular Road and march together to the incinerator site. On 16th January 100s again marched against the plans.

FIND OUT MORE AND GET INVOLVED

stop-edmonton-incinerator.org

[facebook.com/](https://facebook.com/StopEdmontonIncinerator)

[StopEdmontonIncinerator](https://twitter.com/StopTheRebuild)

[@StopTheRebuild](https://twitter.com/StopTheRebuild)



POLITICIANS IGNORE LONG COVID

Long Covid is an aspect of the pandemic that is not well reported and not well understood. Approximately 1.3 million people are living with long Covid across the UK. According to a survey by the Office of National Statistics, long Covid has an incredibly diverse range of symptoms stretching from severe fatigue, brain fog and insomnia to shortness of breath, chest pains and heart palpitations.

Many long Covid patients are unable to work and getting help and support can be difficult and demoralising. People with long Covid, or related conditions such as chronic fatigue syndrome, routinely have their claims for Employment and Support Allowance rejected. The fitness to work assessment to get benefits, is not fit for purpose in assessing these kinds of conditions. Many find that, following an assessment where they are asked if they can take a bus and tie their shoelaces, they are told they are fit to work and not eligible for benefits.

Some have their claim upheld on appeal, but this is hit-and-miss, and it is too often the most vulnerable who are unable to appeal or find their appeal is rejected.

The Government's 'herd immunity' policy is perfectly suited to creating as many long Covid cases as possible. The focus by the government and media on hospitalisations and deaths as the only measures for the progress of the pandemic ignores

other longer-term effects, including long Covid.

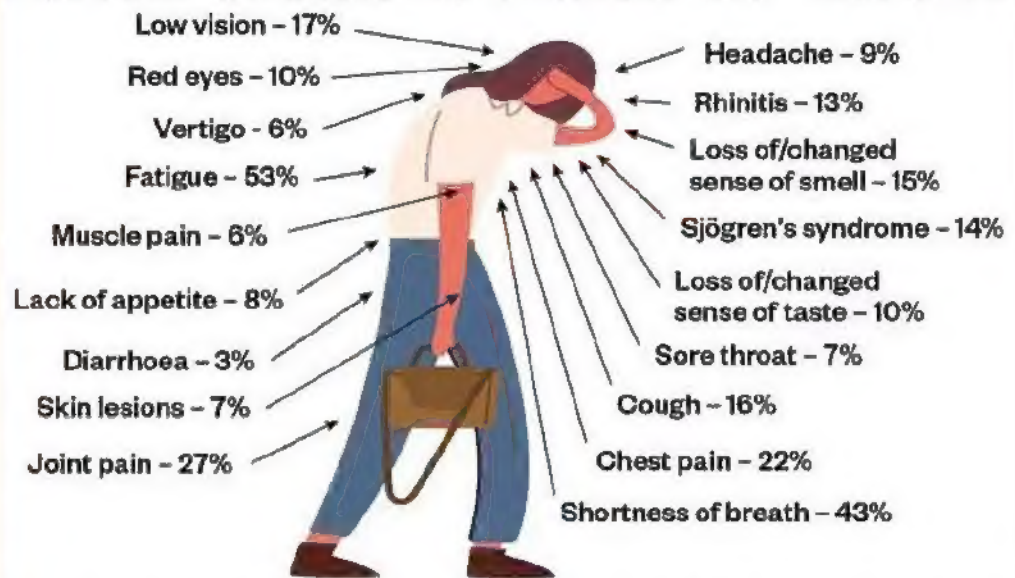
Throughout the pandemic the government has chosen to close its eyes and hope for the best, rather than develop robust policies to combat the virus. It is now time to focus on measures that can reduce long term harm.

Policies designed to drive down numbers of Covid cases, in the UK and globally, would surely be better in the long term from both a public health and an economic perspective. Vaccinating the world, rather than hoarding vaccines in the UK (and other developed nations), would reduce the chances of new variants being created and help bring about

an end to the pandemic sooner. In the UK, investing in testing capability, ventilation, air purification and proper public information regarding ways to reduce the spread of the virus could have reduced transmission without the need for lockdowns or other restrictions of people's freedoms.

There is no treatment for long covid, although some measures such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and some alternative therapies can be helpful. Research into chronic fatigue related conditions has been lacking for many years. Specialist fatigue clinics are few and far between and waiting lists are very long. If we are to prevent a very long-term public health and economic fallout from this pandemic, then significantly more research and investment will be needed in this area.

LONG TERM EFFECTS OF COVID



THE LABOUR PARTY WILL NOT MAKE A BETTER WORLD

People often vote Labour hoping to move towards equality, freedom and social justice. Is Parliament part of the problem or the solution? To predict the future, we need to understand the past.

In 1945 Labour won the election with a landslide majority - the strongest position they have ever been in. After years of war, many did not want to put up with a society of inequality, poverty and shortages for the working class - they demanded change.

Labour co-opted and channelled this anger to help develop the modern welfare state. Yet in the next 5 years they used troops and courts to break strikes, maintained austerity, a wage freeze and rising unemployment. Abroad they perpetuated the British Empire, helped the Dutch in Indonesia, intervened militarily

in Egypt, threatened Iran over oil interests, shot down demonstrators and used napalm in Greece, re-established relations with Spain's fascist dictatorship, bombed Indian villages, and applied vicious repression in Kenya and Malaya.

Labour faces enemies

It doesn't matter how radical their leader or manifesto - Labour remain active supporters of capitalism, parliamentary oppression and the systematic disempowerment of the working class. Corbyn was one of the most radical Labour leaders ever, but to try to climb into power even he was forced to abandon many of his policies including those on nuclear weapons, austerity, immigration, NATO, the monarchy, and the police. Even if in power he would, like Syriza in Greece, have to break his promises because the system

co-opts or rejects radical manifestos. Keir Starmer is purging the left, has abandoned his previous calls for a £15ph minimum wage, promised more police, and tougher sentences, supports Britain's role in world politics, has refused to promise increased spending on public services, and backed employers.

We mustn't rely on political parties or well-meaning left politicians to act for us. We must organise ourselves wherever we live, work or study - building non-hierarchical organisations, collective community and workplace movements and coordinating our struggles against the system.

Using mobilisations and direct action we need to campaign for our demands, build counter-power and create a society free of exploitation, injustice and inequality.

STOP PRESS: Wars continue in Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, Ethiopia and elsewhere...

FREE FOOD AND SOLIDARITY

Energy costs and fuel prices have shot up recently, affecting the cost of everything else, and businesses have put their prices up accordingly. Prices are rising faster than at any time in the last 30 years.

People have seen their wages or benefits effectively reduced which leaves many families with higher bills and less money to cover the cost.

Richard Walker, boss of supermarket chain Iceland, said he was seeing an "alarming" rise in the use of food banks. "There may be some people facing a choice between heating or eating. We're losing customers to hunger," and "Some customers only have £25 a week to spend on food, so they're already struggling to make ends meet," he said.

He is right of course, but there is an alternative to the food bank. What if people in need could take control of the same free food that would normally go to a food bank and sort it themselves, for themselves.

Well guess what? That is what a food co-op does. Cooperation Tottenham is part of a network of food co-ops in London and across the UK.

People join the co-op, no vouchers necessary. Like a food bank the members of the co-op organise a place to get the food delivered to, they sort the food for themselves and other members and take the food they want/need home for themselves and their family. No need to wait in line.

It is a practical way of helping people financially, without relying on others to perform an act of charity. Most people don't want charity. It can be demeaning and embarrassing for the recipients.

If you are struggling to feed your family join a food co-op near you or start your own. Help is out there.

FIND OUT MORE AND GET INVOLVED

Cooperation Tottenham:

cooperationtottenham@gmail.com
or call Dave on 07932 328760

Cooperation Town (London wide):

cooperationkentishtown@gmail.com

SECOND CLASS SERVICE

After a two-year campaign to keep it open, protests and a 10,000 signature petition, Green Lanes Main Post Office finally closed in April 2019. Locals expected yet another restaurant, pound-shop or bookmakers. More annoying it has been sitting empty for nearly 3 years.

Empty maybe but not unused. During this time, it has provided a temporary home for three different groups.

The first, in summer 2019, housed a number of homeless people/squatters. "I did not even know they were there, all was peace and quiet" one neighbour wrote at the time. But, after 2 months, and "losing possession" in court, they were evicted.

Another year of being empty, and as the first wave of COVID-19 was easing, people re-occupied it. An agreement with Post Office Ltd, to look after it until it was needed, seemed possible. But no, the new residents were taken to court. But with good legal support the eviction didn't come. They felt secure and opened a

'free shop' for the community. People could bring unwanted items and others take them without charge. It was very popular, and busy every day. Alongside, the local 'Food not Bombs' group also served free food from the building to people struggling during the pandemic.

The "free shop" was finally evicted on December 21st 2020 - 4 days before Christmas. After another empty period where the owners did nothing, some trans-gender activists were the third to occupy the building. And again evicted.

It's mad the owners leave it empty, paying for security and multiple court/bailiffs fees, when it could be in community use. Surely a solution to the housing crisis, is to support people taking action into their own hands when needed, but also coming to mutually beneficial agreements allowing 'meanwhile use'.

509 Green Lanes is still boarded up and empty. We look forward to new people putting it to good use soon.

CAPITALISM IS KILLING US

To mark the COP26 Climate Emergency Global Summit in Glasgow, around 400 local people in Haringey gathered opposite the Civic Centre in November to discuss and demand immediate and effective action to safeguard our climate and society. This was one of a range of mass protests around the UK and world.

Speakers argued that the summit was long on promises and woefully short on the fast and effective action needed NOW to phase out all fossil fuel usage in the world. Some also recognised that continued capitalist growth was not sustainable.

It was pointed out that economic and social change needs to be accompanied by massive support and justice for the most affected countries and communities around the world. This must include people in the UK who will be affected by growing climate instability and changing economic patterns.

One speaker pointed out that young people are very angry. They will be inheriting a catastrophic

situation not of their making. All speakers stressed people could and should contribute by adopting sustainable lifestyles and making demands for Government action.

We need a debate on our response to climate change in terms of the revolutionary changes needed. But we must acknowledge that capitalism - whether green or neoliberal versions of it - requires the promise of constant growth. This need, and market competition, destroys the environment by demanding more and more resources, while also drives down wages to keep profits high. Capitalism is the real cause for climate change, species extinction, extreme weather patterns and the related disasters we are already beginning to experience.

A change of historical significance is required, one that will end the relationship between capitalist production and environmental damage. We have to build a sustainable society based on solidarity, mutual aid and a caring relationship with our environment.

Let's create a world without armies, borders and governments.

HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARDS MIGRANTS

Since 2010 the Home Office have denied undocumented people their basic human rights in the UK through a set of policies known as the 'hostile environment'.

These brutal policies have prevented people from accessing services that should be available to everyone who lives here - housing, benefits, healthcare, education, work and bank accounts - to name a few.

The Government dictated that employers, landlords, NHS staff and other private and public sector workers check a person's immigration status before they can offer them a job, housing, healthcare, or other support. The penalties for non-compliance would be a fine or

even imprisonment. Undocumented migrants found themselves criminalised for doing what the rest of us take for granted.

When the Immigration Act came into force in 1973 people already settled in the UK were granted indefinite leave to remain (allowed to live here) but were not given the documentation to prove it.

The recent Windrush enquiry highlighted the awful abuse of people who fell through the gaps because of this, even though they were here legally. More than 80 were deported and an unknown number were left with no choice but to leave the country. Many couldn't pay for a solicitor to prove their case or

challenge a wrong decision from the Home Office. Others lost jobs or were refused work and left destitute.

These policies can only be seen as racist in so far as they predominantly affect ethnic communities the hardest.

The hostile environment is still here, but support is out there for those who need it.

FIND OUT MORE AND GET INVOLVED

Notre Dame Refugee Centre
notredamerc.org.uk

Haringey Migrant Support
Centre: haringeymsc.org

Haringey Welcome
haringeywelcome.org

PROTECTING HARINGEY'S GREEN SPACES

Local public green spaces are vital to all sections of every local community and neighbourhood. We have to ensure they are protected, accessible and well looked after. Thanks to the rise of local 'Friends Groups' over the last 20 years, people have managed to champion and improve those 60 spaces that are officially recognised as parks, woodlands, recreation grounds and nature reserves - although there have been battles to protect some of those sites. The Haringey Friends of Parks Forum has persuaded the Council to implement legal covenants to protect those 60 sites 'in perpetuity'.

However, there are hundreds of 'undesigned' green spaces on housing estates, former allotment sites, and all manner of relatively small 'pocket' sites which are just as important to those living near them. Yet developers and the Council are constantly eyeing them up for selling off or developing as housing. In fact,

the Council is currently looking for sites for even more house-building around our borough, and many local spaces are once again being put under threat.

An example is New Road Park in N22, where a new Friends Group is up in arms to both defend a much loved but badly neglected space and demand a range of improvements. Residents on every estate, and in every corner of the borough, need to do the same for their local greenspace - especially the ones which are neglected or under threat. Why not join your local Friends Group (or Residents Association) or set up such a group if there isn't one for a green space near you? It is not just about protecting what we've got, but also about building up community empowerment and residents' action in every neighbourhood so we can eventually take control of our lives and our borough.

FIND OUT MORE AND GET INVOLVED
haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk



WHO WE ARE

In 1991, Haringey Solidarity Group (HSG) emerged from the Anti-Poll Tax campaign. We wanted to create a long-term, vibrant, non-hierarchical group, unlike political parties where ambitions and posturing displace real politics.

We believe in ridding ourselves of the current system which places profit and power before people's needs. This involves getting organised, fighting back and collectively taking those decisions which affect our daily lives.

We think people should take control of their community and workplace struggles, support each other, encourage practical solidarity, build the necessary skills and knowledge for these struggles and generate strong, permanent, grassroots networks.

Many of us are involved with local residents', community and campaign groups within the borough. We support workers in dispute, campaigns against public service cuts and threatened community amenities. We are active on environmental, housing and claimants'

issues and resist state controls.

Come and share your views at our monthly meeting. We welcome your involvement and with practical activities including distributing this newsletter and producing other materials including posters and leaflets.

FIND OUT MORE AND GET INVOLVED

Visit haringey.org.uk / Befriend us on Facebook / Write to PO Box 2474, London N8 / Phone 0845 2235270 / Email info@haringey.org.uk